



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of Maryland
Northern Division*

*Thomas M. DiBiagio
United States Attorney*

*Vickie E. LeDuc
Public Information Officer*

*6625 United States Courthouse
101 West Lombard Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2692*

*410-209-4800
TTY/TDD: 410-962-4462
410-209-4885
FAX 410-962-3091
Vickie.LeDuc@usdoj.gov*

**OCTOBER 28, 2004
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION CONTACT
VICKIE E. LEDUC, AUSA
(410) 209-4885**

NOVEMBER 2, 2004 ELECTION DAY PROGRAM IN MARYLAND

United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Thomas M. DiBiagio announced today that Assistant United States Attorney Jennifer Smith will lead the efforts of his Office in connection with the Justice Department's nationwide Election Day Program for the upcoming November 2, 2004 general elections. Smith has been appointed to serve as the District Election Officer for the District of Maryland and is responsible for overseeing the District's handling of complaints of election fraud and voting rights abuses, in consultation with the Department of Justice.

In October of 2002, Attorney General Ashcroft established a Department-wide Ballot Access and Voting Integrity Initiative. The goals of this Initiative are to increase the Department's ability to deter election fraud and discrimination at the polls, and prosecute these offenses whenever and wherever they occur. Voting is to be made easier and cheating harder. Both goals are equally important. It is imperative that in pursuing voter integrity, ballot access is not in any way diminished or harmed.

The Department's long-standing Election Day Program furthers the goals of the Initiative. The Program also is intended to ensure public confidence in the integrity of the election process by

providing local points of contact within the Department where the public can report possible election fraud and voting rights violations while the polls are open on election day. The franchise is the cornerstone of American democracy. We all must ensure that those who are entitled to the franchise exercise it, while those who seek to corrupt it are brought to justice.

In order to respond to any complaints of election fraud or voting rights abuses on November 2, 2004 and to ensure that such complaints are directed to the appropriate authorities, Assistant United States Attorney/DEO Smith will be on duty in Maryland while the polls are open. She can be reached by the public at the following telephone numbers: (410) 209-4800 and/or (443) 677-9014.

The FBI will also have special agents available in each field office and resident agency in this District to receive allegations of election fraud and other election abuses. The FBI can be reached by the public at (410) 265-8080.

Complaints about ballot access problems or discrimination can also be made directly to the Civil Rights Division's Voting Section in Washington at 1-800-253-3931 or 202-307-2767.

United States Attorney Thomas DiBiagio said "Voting rights abuses impair votes honestly cast and corrupt the core of our representative form of government. As crimes against both the individual and the government, any election fraud will be dealt with promptly and aggressively. Anyone who has information suggesting electoral corruption should make that information available immediately to my Office, the FBI or the Civil Rights Division."